

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 523

October 27, 1995, 11:04 a.m.
Page S-15988 Temp. Record

BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION/Substitute

SUBJECT: **Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995 . . . S. 1357. Simon/Conrad modified substitute amendment No. 2984.**

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 19-80

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1357, the Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995, will result in a balanced budget in seven years, as scored by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The bill will also provide a \$245 billion middle-class tax cut, \$141.4 billion of which will be to provide a \$500 per child tax credit.

The Conrad/Simon modified substitute amendment would eliminate all the tax relief in the bill, would amend the formula for calculating the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by reducing the percentage by 0.5 percent (thus, for example, the CPI of 2.6 percent for fiscal year 1996 would be reduced to 2.1 percent by the new formula), would cut the rate of increase in Medicare by \$168 billion, would cut the rate of increase in Medicaid by \$83 billion, would increase spending on numerous social programs, and would eliminate or modify numerous other proposals in the underlying bill.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

This Democratic alternative amendment would make a few simple changes to the approach taken by this bill, and it would balance the budget in the process. First, the tax cuts would be eliminated. A good many of our Republican colleagues we are certain agree with us on this first step. As Senator Specter noted, if a secret ballot were held, at least 20 Republican Senators would vote to get rid of the tax cuts. Second, the amendment would reduce the CPI by 0.5 percent. The Finance Committee appointed a commission to study the current method of calculating the CPI, and was informed that it is overstated by 0.7 to 2 percent. A reduction is long overdue. By reforming the CPI and by spending the fiscal dividend instead of giving it in tax breaks, the Democratic alternative budget would have fairer results. It would still provide substantial cuts in Medicare and Medicaid (\$168 billion and \$83 billion, respectively), but the cuts would not be as severe. Overall, this amendment would allow \$36 billion more for welfare spending and \$79 billion more for discretionary spending, including discretionary education programs. We are aware that a majority of Senators

(See other side)

YEAS (19)		NAYS (80)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (19 or 41%)	Republicans (53 or 100%)	Democrats (27 or 59%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
	Akaka	Abraham	Helms	Baucus	
	Bradley	Ashcroft	Hutchison	Biden	
	Breaux	Bennett	Inhofe	Bingaman	
	Conrad	Bond	Jeffords	Boxer	
	Dodd	Brown	Kassebaum	Bryan	
	Feinstein	Burns	Kempthorne	Bumpers	
	Glenn	Campbell	Kyl	Byrd	
	Graham	Chafee	Lott	Daschle	
	Johnston	Coats	Lugar	Dorgan	
	Kerrey	Cochran	Mack	Exon	
	Leahy	Cohen	McCain	Feingold	
	Levin	Coverdell	McConnell	Ford	
	Lieberman	Craig	Murkowski	Harkin	
	Moynihan	D'Amato	Nickles	Heflin	
	Nunn	DeWine	Pressler	Hollings	
	Pell	Dole	Roth	Inouye	
	Pryor	Domenici	Santorum	Kennedy	
	Robb	Faircloth	Shelby	Kerry	
	Simon	Frist	Simpson	Kohl	
		Gorton	Smith	Lautenberg	
		Gramm	Snowe	Mikulski	
		Grams	Specter	Moseley-Braun	
		Grassley	Stevens	Murray	
		Gregg	Thomas	Reid	
		Hatch	Thompson	Rockefeller	
		Hatfield	Thurmond	Sarbanes	
			Warner	Wellstone	
<p>EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE: 1—Official Business 2—Necessarily Absent 3—Illness 4—Other</p> <p>SYMBOLS: AY—Announced Yea AN—Announced Nay PY—Paired Yea PN—Paired Nay</p>					

are not likely to accept this amendment, but we think it is important that constructive alternative proposals receive consideration. Those Senators who are fiscally conservative but who believe that the Republican bill is too heavily weighted in favor of the rich should join us in voting to pass the Conrad/Simon amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

We find this substitute amendment to be very intriguing. First, it will reduce the rate of growth in Medicare by \$168 billion. Throughout this debate, we have been hearing from our Democratic colleagues that a reduction of only \$89 billion should be enacted at this point in time. Perhaps this amendment shows that many Democrats recognize the foolhardiness of making such a minor reduction. Second, this amendment would adjust the formula for the consumer price index (CPI) by revising it down by half a percentage point. The advisory commission to the Finance Committee reported that the current formula overstates the CPI by 0.7 to 2 percent. By making this adjustment, this amendment will reduce spending by \$115 billion. We favor this portion of their amendment, and note that their estimate of \$115 billion is low; a 0.5 percent formula reduction over 7 years would result in \$140 billion in savings. Their amendment has one very objectionable feature, though--it gets to balance by spending the \$170 billion fiscal dividend that will only materialize if balance is achieved. Our colleagues' opposition to providing tax reduction with the fiscal dividend is one thing, but spending that fiscal dividend before it even exists is quite another. This amendment was handed to us only a few seconds ago, so we do not really understand everything that is in it. Our colleagues, of course, do not expect us to accept this amendment. They wanted only to make a few broad, and we believe constructive, proposals that may serve as a starting point for future discussions. We applaud their effort, and urge the rejection of their amendment.